

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Teaching the Student the Method of Studying

By:

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Contents

<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Translator's Note</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>The Reality of Knowledge and Jurisprudence and the Virtue of Knowledge.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>The Intention While Studying.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Choosing the Correct Knowledge, the Teacher, the Companion and the Need for Steadfastness</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Honouring Knowledge and the People of Knowledge.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Effort, Punctuality and Zeal.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>The Beginning of the Lesson, its Amount and Sequence.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Trust</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>The Time for Seeking Knowledge.....</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Compassion and Advice</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Seeking Benefit.....</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Piety While Studying</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Factors Which Improve the Memory</i>	<i>106</i>
<i>Factors Which Increase or Decrease Sustenance.....</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Index.....</i>	<i>120</i>

Transliteration

The following method of transliteration of the Arabic letters has been used in this book:

ا	ā
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s

ش	sh
ص	s
ض	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	à, í, ú
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	ū
ه	h

ي	ī, y
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ﷺ	(<i>Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam</i>) May Allāh send blessings and salutations upon him - used for Nabî ﷺ
ﷺ	(<i>Àlaihis salām</i>) Salutations upon him – used for all prophets
ﷺ	(<i>Radiallāhu 'anhu</i>) May Allāh be pleased with him – used for the <i>Sahâbah</i> ﷺ
ﷻ	(<i>Jalla Jalāluhū</i>) The Sublime – used for Allāh ﷻ
ﷻ	(<i>Āzza wa jall</i>) Allāh is full of glory and sublimity
(رحمه الله)	(<i>Rahimahullāh</i>) May Allāh have mercy on him – used for deceased saints and scholars

Translator's Note

It should be remembered that this book was written in an era when students were completely devoted to their studies and had immense attachment to their teachers. Some of the facts mentioned herein may not be applicable to our times and may seem far-fetched because of our degeneration and lack of enthusiasm for knowledge. However, in that august era, these attributes were commonly found. One should therefore read this book keeping the background of that era in mind. A student should endeavour to follow the pious predecessors as closely as possible. This will, Inshâ-Allâh, bring immense blessings in his studies and have a profound impact on his knowledge. At the same time, if he cannot manage to accomplish what the predecessors achieved, he should not become despondent and abandon his studies. The path of knowledge is one of continuous striving and sacrifice. Allah ﷻ will reward the student according to his efforts and eventually crown his endeavours with success.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله وكفى وسلام علي عباده الذين اصطفى

Introduction

All praises are due to Allāh ﷻ who granted man virtue over the rest of the world because of knowledge and practice. Peace and salutations upon Muḥammad ﷺ, the leader of the Arabs and non-Arabs and upon his family and companions, the fountain sources of knowledge and wisdom.

I saw that in our time, most of the students strive for knowledge but do not reach it¹ because they have erred in its path and abandoned its conditions. Every person that errs on the path becomes misguided and he will not obtain his aim whether his aim is minor

¹ They have been deprived of its benefits and fruits, namely practising on that knowledge and propagating it.

or something great.

I therefore decided to explain the method of studying for them according to what I read in the books and heard from my teachers, people of knowledge and wisdom. I did this with the hope that the ones sincerely desirous of knowledge will supplicate for my salvation on the day of Judgement. I had previously performed istikhārah.² I named the book '*Teaching the Student the Method of Studying*'. I divided it into the following chapters:

1. The Reality of Knowledge and Jurisprudence and the Virtue of Knowledge
2. The Intention While Studying
3. Choosing the Correct Knowledge, the Teacher, the Companion and the Need for Steadfastness
4. Honouring Knowledge and the People of Knowledge
5. Effort, Punctuality and Zeal
6. The Beginning of the Lesson, its Amount and

² To seek goodness from Allāh.

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Sequence

7. Trust
8. The Time for Seeking Knowledge
9. Compassion and Advice
10. Seeking Benefit
11. Piety While Studying
12. Factors Which Improve the Memory
13. Factors Which Increase or Decrease Sustenance

The Reality of Knowledge and Jurisprudence and the Virtue of Knowledge

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim male and female."³

Remember that it is not obligatory upon every Muslim to seek every type of knowledge. The knowledge of the present is obligatory as the saying goes, "The most virtuous knowledge is the knowledge of the present and the most virtuous practice is the protection of the present condition (from ruin and corruption)."

It is obligatory upon the believer to seek the knowledge of the condition he is in. Ṣalāh is essential for him. Therefore it is obligatory for him to seek that amount of knowledge of ṣalāh by means of which he can perform the obligatory ṣalāh. It will be compulsory to seek that amount of knowledge by

³ Narrated by Ibn Mājah and Al-Bayhaqī in Shu'abul Īmān.

means of which one can perform the compulsory actions. This is because whatever leads to a compulsory act is also compulsory.

The same applies to fasting and zakāh if he possesses wealth, to perform hajj if it is obligatory upon him and the laws of business if he is a trader.

Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan As-Shaybānī⁴ was asked, "Why don't you write a book on abstinence?" He replied, "I have written a book on business dealings." He meant that an abstinent person is one who abstains from doubts and undesirable acts in his commercial dealings.

The same applies to all dealings and occupations. Every person that engages in some occupation has to learn the knowledge of abstaining from the prohibited acts thereof. Similarly, it is obligatory to learn the condition of the heart, with reference to trust (in Allāh), turning towards Allāh, fearing Him

⁴ He was a student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. He had the honour of compiling the jurisprudence of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. He passed away in Rayy in 189 A.H. (805 C.E.).

and being pleased with Him. This occurs in all conditions.

The nobility of knowledge is not concealed from anyone because it is specific to humanity. Man and other animals share in all qualities e.g. bravery, courage, strength, generosity, compassion etc. except for knowledge. It is due to knowledge that Allāh ﷻ granted Ādam ﷺ superiority over the angels and commanded them to prostrate to him.

The superiority of knowledge is because it is a means of virtue and piety by means of which a person is entitled to nobility and eternal good fortune in the sight of Allāh ﷻ. The following verses were recited to Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله):

Study, for knowledge is a means of glamour and virtue for the seeker.

And it is strong proof that the people of knowledge have all the praiseworthy attributes.

Endeavour to increase your knowledge daily and continue swimming in the oceans of

benefit.

Learn jurisprudence because it provides one the opportunity to attain noble actions and piety in the most moderate fashion.

It is the guiding flag towards the paths of guidance.

It is a fortified fortress that protects one from all calamities

For one pious jurist is severer against satan than a thousand worshippers.⁵

Knowledge is a means of ascertaining attributes like pride, humility, love, chastity, extravagance, niggardliness etc. The same applies to all attributes of character like generosity, miserliness, cowardliness and valour.

⁵ The specific number of one thousand is not intended. This is merely mentioned to indicate an excessive number. A pious jurist is stronger in combating satan than many non-juristic worshippers because the jurist clearly knows the limits of what is lawful and unlawful. Satan cannot easily mislead such a person. As for the worshipper who is not a jurist, he worships Allāh without insight. It is consequently very simple to plunge him into deviation by creating all kinds of doubts and hesitations in his mind.

For verily, pride, miserliness, cowardliness and extravagance are harām. One cannot abstain from them except by knowing them and their opposite qualities. Therefore it is obligatory for man to have knowledge of these qualities.

The great scholar, Imām Nāṣirud-dīn Abul Qāsim (502 A.H.) wrote an excellent book on the topic of character. It is compulsory for every Muslim to memorize it.

As for memorizing or knowing those things which occur some of the time, it is *fard kifāyah*. If some people of the community obtain such knowledge, the rest will be absolved of the duty. However, if no one does so, then every individual will carry the burden of the sin. It is essential for the *imām* (leader) to command the people to obtain such knowledge and compel them to do so.

According to some scholars, the knowledge of the conditions that a person experiences all the time is like food – each person has a need for it. The knowledge which a person requires some of the time

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According to some scholars, the knowledge of the conditions that a person experiences all the time is like food – each person has a need for it. The knowledge which a person requires some of the time

is like medicine which a person only requires during illness. Astrology is like an illness – it is harām to study it because it is harmful and has no benefit. It is impossible to flee from the decree of Allāh.

Every Muslim should preoccupy himself all the time in remembering Allāh, supplication, humbling oneself, recitation of the Qur'ān, giving charity to repel calamities and performing ṣalāh. One should ask Allāh to grant one forgiveness and comfort in this world and the hereafter so that Allāh ﷻ can save him from all problems. The one who engages in supplication is not deprived of being answered.

If a calamity is preordained for one, it will most certainly occur but Allāh ﷻ will make it easy for him and with the blessing of the du'ā, he will be able to bear it patiently.

Yes, one can seek that amount of astronomy by means of which a person can ascertain the direction of the Ka'bah and the times of ṣalāh. It is permissible to engage in studying medicine for it is a beneficial science like the other subjects. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself

used medication.

It is related that Imām Shāfi'ī (رحمه الله) said, "Knowledge is of two categories, jurisprudence for religion and medicine for the body. Everything else has no value."⁶

Knowledge is a quality that clarifies the state of the one it is attached to. Fiqh is knowing the subtleties of knowledge and reaching the depths of it.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) said, "Fiqh is knowing the conditions that affect the *nafs* (self)."

He also said that the aim of knowledge was to practise on it. The reality of practice is to abandon that which is temporary for that which is permanent.

It is therefore highly essential for a person not to

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remain heedless of his carnal self. Look carefully at what benefits it brings and what harms it can cause in this world and the hereafter. Attain those things which cause benefit to it and abstain from those things which cause harm to it so that one's intelligence and knowledge do not become a proof against one as this will increase one's punishment. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ from His wrath and punishment.

There are numerous verses and authentic ahādīth regarding the virtues of knowledge. We have not mentioned them so that the book does not become too lengthy.

The Intention While Studying

It is essential to have an intention during the course of one's studies because the intention is fundamental in all actions. Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reported to have said, "All actions are based on intentions." This is an authentic hadīth narrated from Nabī ﷺ.

How many actions are there which have the outward form of worldly actions but become actions of the hereafter merely by having a good intention. And how many actions are there which have the form of being actions of the hereafter but they become actions of the world because of having an evil intention.

The student, by means of seeking knowledge, should intend earning the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, obtaining the hereafter, removing ignorance from himself and other ignoramuses, reviving Dīn and maintaining Islam. The maintenance of Islam is through knowledge. Abstinence and piety cannot be achieved with ignorance.

Imām Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله), the author of *A Hidāyah*, recited the following verses of a poet to me:

*The scholar who exceeds the limits of Dīn is a
cause of great corruption,*

*But the ignorant worshipper is even worse than
him.*

*Whoever adopts the way of these two for his
Dīn,*

*It will be a cause of dissension for him in his
Dīn and his worldly life.*

The student should also intend being grateful to Allāh ﷻ for the bounties of intelligence and good health granted to him. The student should never have this in mind that due to his knowledge, people will honour and respect him, nor try to gather the chattels of the world or the honour of rulers etc.

Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله) said, "If all the people of the world become my slaves, I will free them immediately and absolve myself from them

completely."

The reason for this is that the one who experiences the taste of knowledge and practising it, will perhaps very seldom desire what the people have.

Our teacher, Imām Qiwāmud-dīn Ḥammād Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Ismā'īl As-Saffār Al-Anṣārī (رحمه الله),⁷ quoted the following verses of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رحمه الله) to us,

*Whoever seeks knowledge to earn the hereafter,
has succeeded with the guidance and grace of
Allāh.*

*Very unfortunate is that student who seeks
knowledge
for the sake of the honour of the people.⁸*

However, if a student seeks honour for the sake of

⁷ He was from Bukhārā from a family of knowledge and abstinence. He was a jurist and an expert in linguistics. He passed away in Samarqand in 576 A.H. (1180 C.E.).

⁸ or that people must accept his status or give him gifts.

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assisting him in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, or for implementing the truth and upholding Dīn, not for personal motives and carnal desires, it is permissible to the extent that it assists him in these avenues.

A student should ponder that he is seeking knowledge with so much effort and exertion. Why should he then spend it on this despised world that is temporary and paltry.

This world is very little in comparison to the hereafter.

The one who has love and affection for it is the most despised man.

Its magical charm makes nations deaf and blind.

They become perplexed without finding any path.

It is essential for the bearer of knowledge to be cautious of those things which cause disgrace to knowledge and its bearers.

A student should be humble. Humility is between arrogance and disgrace. Chastity is the same. More details can be found in the book 'Al-Akhlāq'.

Sheikh Ruknud-dīn (رحمه الله)⁹, better known as Al-Adībul Mukhtār recited the following verses to me,

*Humility is the trait of a pious person,
By means of it, a person can reach great heights.*

Very strange is the one who is arrogant but he does not know whether he is fortunate or unfortunate.

During the pangs of death, how will his soul be removed? Will it be removed easily or with great difficulty?

Grandeur is an attribute of Allāh.

Therefore be cautious in adopting this quality.

⁹ His name was Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Yūsuf Al-Farghānī. He was a jurist and expert linguist. He passed away in Marghīnān in 594 A.H. (1196 C.E.)

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) said to his companions, "Respect your turbans and be frugal in spending."¹⁰

He said this so that knowledge and its bearers are not despised. A student should carefully read *Kitābul Waṣīyah* which Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) wrote for Yūsuf Ibn Khālīd As-Samtī¹¹ (رحمه الله) when he returned home. The student will find the necessary subject matter in it which he requires.

My teacher, Burhān-ud-dīn Ālī Ibn Abī Bakr (رحمه الله) ordered me to write out this book. I complied with his request on my return journey home. The teacher and the muftī should study it when dealing with the general public.

¹⁰ That is, a student should raise his personality so much that respect and honour flow from it. The aim of this is merely to honour knowledge and raise its status.

¹¹ He was one of the students of Imām Abū Hanīfah. Imām Shāfiʿī said that he was a distinguished personality. He learnt a great deal from Imām Abū Hanīfah. Imām Ibn Mājah narrated *ahādīth* from him. The people looked up to him. Then he turned his attention towards worshipping Allāh. He passed away in 189 A.H. (805 C.E.)

Choosing the Correct Knowledge, the Teacher, the Companion and the Need for Steadfastness

A student should choose the best knowledge. Then he should consider studying that knowledge which is most essential for him from a religious point of view and what he requires for comfort in the hereafter.

First comes the subject of *tauḥīd*¹² and the recognition of Allāh ﷻ in order to recognize Allāh ﷻ by means of proofs. Although the belief of a muqallid is acceptable in our view, he is sinful if he abandons the proof.¹³

¹² the oneness of Allāh.

¹³ The best proof is one that appeals to the nature of man and he is naturally forced to accept it. An excellent proof was tendered by a Bedouin who forcefully said,

البصرة تدل علي البعير والأثر يدل علي المسير فأرض ذات فجاج (وسماء ذات أبراج أفلا تدل علي العلي القدير) – The dung indicates the presence of a camel and the footprints indicate the presence of a

He should choose the old narrations¹⁴ and abandon the innovations. The scholars have said, "Adopt the old narrations and beware of the new ones."

A student should refrain from involving himself in those issues which arose after the cream of the *Úlamā* left this world. These *masāil* distance him from jurisprudence, destroy his life, create mutual enmity and they are a sign of *Qiyāmah* and a sign of knowledge and jurisprudence leaving the world. This has been mentioned in a *ḥadīth*.

As for choosing a teacher, he should choose the one who is the most learned, the most pious and senior in age just as *Imām Abū Ḥanīfah* (رحمه الله) chose *Hammād Ibn Abī Sulaimān*¹⁵ (رحمه الله) after

traveller. Then why is it that the earth with all its valleys and the sky with its galaxies do not indicate the presence of a Being that is lofty and all powerful.

¹⁴ Old narrations refer to those facts which have been unanimously accepted by the scholars as being correct due to their correct proofs. Innovations refer to those facts in which there are always differences and the opinions of people always clash regarding them.

¹⁵ He was from among the *Tābiʿīn*. He had encyclopaedic knowledge

pondering and reflecting. *Imām Abū Ḥanīfah* (رحمه الله) said, "I found him to be a dignified and forbearing teacher who was patient in all matters."¹⁶

He also said, "I remained steadfast by him. As a result, my knowledge germinated by him."

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رحمه الله) said, "I heard one of the sages of *Samarqand* saying, 'A student came to consult me regarding studying. He had resolved to go to *Bukhārā* to study.'

One should in a like manner consult in all matters. Allah ﷻ ordered *Rasulullah* ﷺ to consult in manners whereas there was no one with greater understanding than him. In spite of that, he was told to consult. He consulted the *Sahabah* رضي الله عنهم in all matters

and was a jurist per excellence. *Imām Abū Ḥanīfah* learnt most of his knowledge from him and stayed with him for eighteen years. He passed away in 120 A.H. (738 C.E.).

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One should in a like manner consult in all matters. Allah ﷻ ordered *Rasulullah* ﷺ to consult in manners whereas there was no one with greater understanding than him. In spite of that, he was told to consult. He consulted the *Sahabah* ﷺ in all matters

and was a jurist per excellence. Imām Abū *Hanīfah* learnt most of his knowledge from him and stayed with him for eighteen years. He passed away in 120 A.H. (738 C.E.).

¹⁶ He also said, "I have not found anyone more learned in jurisprudence than him."

and even in the necessities of his house.

Àli ؑ said, "No person who consulted was ever destroyed."

It is said that people are of three types: a perfect person, a half person and a non-entity. A perfect person is one who has a correct opinion and he consults the intelligent ones. The second type is a half person whose opinion is correct but he does not consult or he consults but has no opinion. The third person is a non-entity - he neither has any opinion nor does he consult.

Ja'far As-Sadiq (رحمه الله) said to Sufyan Ath-Thauri (رحمه الله), "In your matters, consult those who fear Allah."

The seeking of knowledge is one of the highest of matters and the most difficult. Accordingly, consultation regarding it will be more important and more essential.

The wise man continued, "When you go to Bukhārā, do not be hasty in moving from one teacher to the next. Remain for two months until you ponder and choose a teacher. For if you go to a particular teacher, perhaps you may not be pleased with his lesson. In that case you will leave him and go elsewhere. In this manner, you will have no blessings in your seeking of knowledge.

Therefore ponder for two months regarding a teacher. Consult so that there is no need for you to leave him and turn away from him. Remain steadfast by him so that there are blessings in your knowledge and you will benefit much from your knowledge.

Remember that patience and steadfastness are great fundamentals in all matters but they are rarely found. As it has been said,

Every person makes a move in desiring to reach heights

However, to have steadfastness is extremely difficult.

There is a proverb that bravery is to be patient for a while.

It is therefore essential to remain steadfast by a teacher and to commit oneself to studying a book and not abandoning it. Once you are involved in one subject, do not preoccupy yourself in another subject until you have mastered the first one. Do not travel unnecessarily to another city because all these matters disperse your thoughts, preoccupy the heart, destroy time and hurt the feelings of the teacher.

Completely abandon all your carnal desires. A poet says,

Submitting to one's carnal desires is the greatest disgrace

The greatest honour is to overcome one's desires.

Bear all kinds of calamities and difficulties. It is said that treasures of favours are to be found on the heaps of trials and tribulations. The following verses were recited to me and are probably the statement of Ali

450:

Remember, you cannot achieve knowledge except with six factors.

I will inform you of them all.

Intelligence, desire to study, and sufficing on a little,

the guidance of a teacher and a long period of study.

As for choosing a colleague, it is essential to choose one who is diligent, pious and who has the correct temperament and understanding. Always keep away from one who is lazy, idle, neglectful, one who gossips, causes corruption and dissension.

A poet says,

Before finding out about a person, examine the condition of his friend.

A companion follows the ways of his friend.

If he is an evil companion, keep away from him immediately.

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A poet says,

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A companion follows the ways of his friend.

If he is an evil companion, keep away from him immediately.

If he is good, accompany him for you will be correctly guided.

These verses were also recited to me:

Do not befriend one who is lazy.

How many a good persons were spoilt due to the corruption of others.

The filth of a filthy mind rapidly affects the intelligence of an intelligent one.

Just as a burning ember is extinguished when placed in sand.

Nabī ﷺ said, "Every child is born with the inherent nature of Islam in him. However, it is the parents who either make him a Jew, Christian or Magian."

It is mentioned in a Persian couplet,

An evil friend is worse than a poisonous snake.

Besides the pure being of Allah, there is no one.

The evil friend drags you towards hell.

Therefore search for a pious friend by means of which your hopes of attaining heaven can be

fortified.

It has been also said,

If you are searching for knowledge from the upholders of knowledge,

or you are searching for a person who knows about someone that is absent,

then the condition of the land can be gleaned from its citizen's names

and the condition of a person can be gained from his companions.

Honouring Knowledge and the People of Knowledge

Remember that the seeker of knowledge cannot obtain knowledge nor benefit from it except by honouring knowledge and its people and respecting and revering the teacher.

It has been said that one cannot reach heights except by honouring the people of knowledge. Similarly, to fall into the dungeons of disgrace is due to abandoning respect.

It is better to honour and respect a person than to obey him. Don't you see that a person does not become a disbeliever by committing a sin. However, he becomes a disbeliever by mocking a sin and by discarding respect.

Part of respecting knowledge is to respect the teacher. Hadrat Àli عليه السلام said, "I am the slave of the person who teaches me one letter. If he desires, he can sell me and if he desires, he can keep me as a

slave."

The following couplet was recited to me,

The greatest right is that of the teacher.

It is obligatory for the Muslims to consider it.

He is truly entitled to be honoured and revered

If he taught you even one word and a thousand silver coins are not sufficient for him.

The one who has taught you one letter in the matter of religion is your father in religion.

Our teacher, Imam Sadidud-dīn Shirāzī (رحمه الله) used to say, "Our Mashāikh said that whoever desires that his son become an ālim, should serve and assist the destitute jurists, honour them, feed them and give them something. After this, if his son does not become an ālim, his grandson will most certainly become one.

One of the ways of respecting the teacher is not to walk in front of him, not to sit in his place, not to

01 speak first in his presence except with his permission, not to speak excessively by him, not to ask him something at an unsuitable time and to consider the time. Do not knock on his door but rather wait for him to come out.

The summary of this is that one should seek his pleasure, refrain from angering him and obey his orders as long as they do not constitute the disobedience of Allah for there is no obedience in the disobedience of Allah. Nabī ﷺ said, "The worst person is one who destroys his Din due to the worldly requirement of someone else by disobeying Allah."

Part of respecting him is to respect his children and his associates.

Our teacher, Sheikhul Islām Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) the author of Al-Hidāyah, used to narrate that one of the Imāms of Bukhārā was teaching and now and then stood up during the lesson. The people asked the reason why he did that. The Sheikh replied, "My

teacher's son was playing with the children in the street. Now and then he would appear at the door of the masjid. When my gaze would fall on him, I would stand up in respect for my teacher."

Qādī Fakhrud-dīn Al-Arsābandī¹⁷ (رحمه الله) was the leader of the scholars in Marw. The king used to revere him tremendously and he used to say, "I have reached this status because of serving my teacher. I used to serve Qādī Abū Zaid Ad-Dabūsī¹⁸ (رحمه الله). I cooked his food for thirty years and never ate anything from it."

Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Al-Halwānī¹⁹ (رحمه الله) left

¹⁷ He was Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Husain Abū Ja'far. He was a celebrated jurist of his time who wrote several books. He was appointed the Qādī of Marw. He passed away in 511 A.H. (1117 C.E.).

¹⁸ He was one of the great Hanafī Imāms. He was the first person to establish 'ilmul khilāf. He wrote the book 'Taqwīmul Adillah'. He passed away in Bukhārā in 432 A.H. (1041 C.E.).

¹⁹ His name was Ābdul Āzīz Ibn Aḥmad, an Imām of Hanafī Fiqh during his era. He was a mujtahid fil madhhab. He wrote several

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Bukhārā and settled in a village for some days due to some incident that occurred. His students visited him except Sheikh Qādī Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Az-Zaranjarī²⁰ (رحمه الله). When he did eventually meet him, the teacher asked him why he had not visited him. The student replied, "I was pre-occupied in serving my mother." The teacher said, "You will be blessed in your age but you will not be blessed with the illumination of teaching." And this was exactly what occurred for he spent most of his time in the villages and could not formally teach.

Therefore, the one who causes distress to his teacher is deprived of the blessings of knowledge and he will derive little benefit from his knowledge.

Indeed the teacher and the doctor, both of them,

books, among them the celebrated work, 'Al-Mabsūṭ'. He passed away in 448 or 449 A.H. (1056 or 1057 C.E.).

²⁰ One of the great Imāms of Ḥanafī Fiqh. His lineage goes up to the Ṣaḥābī Jābir Ibn ʿAbdullāh ؓ. He studied under Imām Ḥalwānī. He had a phenomenal memory. The people referred to him for narrations. He was known as the 'Small Abū Ḥanīfah'.

*Do not proffer advice if they are not honoured.
Have patience for your malady if you shun the
doctor,
And be satisfied with your ignorance if you
shun the teacher.*

It is reported that the Khalīfah Hārūn Ar-Rashīd (رحمه الله) despatched his son to Aṣma'ī²¹ (رحمه الله) so that the latter could teach him knowledge and etiquette. One day he saw Aṣma'ī (رحمه الله) performing wudū and washing his feet himself while the Khalīfah's son was pouring the water onto his feet. Hārūn Ar-Rashīd (رحمه الله) reprimanded him and said, "I sent him to you in order that you teach him and discipline him. Why did you not tell him to pour the water with one hand and wash your feet with the other?"

Part of respecting knowledge is to respect the books of knowledge. The student should not handle the

²¹ ʿAbdul Malik Ibn Qarīb was one of the Imāms of Arabic Literature. He passed away in 216 A.H. (831 C.E.).

books without ablution.

Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Halwānī (رحمه الله) is reported to have said, "I obtained this knowledge by means of respect. I never touched any paper without being in a state of wudū."

Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah As-Sarakhsī²² (رحمه الله) one night suffered from acute diarrhoea. He was at the time revising his lessons. That night he performed wudū seventeen times because he would never revise his lessons without first performing wudū. The reason for this is that knowledge is light and wudū is light. Thus, the light of knowledge increases with the light of wudū.

It is incumbent for the scholar not to stretch his legs out towards the book. He should place the books of tafsīr on top of the other books out of respect. He

²² He was Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad As-Sarakhsī from Khurāsān. He was a very erudite scholar of scholastic theology, jurisprudence and principles of jurisprudence. He also excelled in debating and wrote many books. He passed away in 483 A.H. (1090 C.E.).

should not place anything on the books.

Our teacher, Sheikh Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) used to narrate from another scholar that a jurist placed his ink bottle on his book. Our teacher said to him, "You will not benefit from your knowledge."

Our teacher, Imām Fakhrud-dīn²³ (رحمه الله) better known as Qādī Khān used to say, "If one does not place the ink bottle on the book in order to belittle it, there is no harm. However, it is better to avoid doing this."

One aspect of respect is to write neatly and not to be untidy in one's writing or to write very tiny alphabets. Decorating the footnotes is also a futile act except where necessary.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) saw a student writing

²³ He was the well known jurist, Ḥasan Ibn Mansūr Al-Auzjandī Al-Farghānī. He wrote many books of jurisprudence. He was a mujtahid in masā'il. He passed away in 592 A.H. (1195 C.E.).

very small alphabets. He said to him, "Do not write so small for if you live, you will regret and if you die, the people after you will swear you." That is, when you grow old and your eyesight becomes weak, you will regret (for not being able to read your own writing).

It is reported that Imām Majdud-dīn Sarkhakī (رحمه الله) said, "Whenever we did not write carefully, we regretted and whenever we left out anything, we regretted later as we were in need of it. Whenever we did not compare our written notes with a correct copy, we later had to regret for this lapse."

The shape of the book should be square as was the shape of Imām Abū Hanīfah's books. It is easier to carry, to put down and to study such books.

One should not use red ink in a book as it was the practice of the philosophers and not the habit of the predecessors. Our Mashāikh disliked the use of red.

Part of respecting knowledge is to respect those

engaged in seeking knowledge and to respect one's students. Flattery (in obtaining a secular need) is a despised act except when seeking knowledge for one can flatter one's teacher or one's colleagues in order to seek benefit from them.

The student should carefully listen to the discourses of knowledge and wisdom with respect and reverence even if he has to listen to a single mas'alah or a single fact of wisdom a thousand times.

It is said that if a person cannot respect knowledge after the thousandth time as he respected it the first time, he is not from among the people of knowledge.

The student should not choose the type of knowledge himself but should hand it over to his teacher because the teacher, through his vast experience, knows what is appropriate for each person and what suits his temperament.

Sheikh Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) used to say that in the previous era, the students used to hand over their

matters of studying to their teachers. As a result, they would reach their aims. However, now the students make the choice themselves and the consequence of this is that they remain deprived of knowledge and jurisprudence.

It is narrated that Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'il Al-Bukhārī (رحمه الله) (257 A.H.) began studying Kitāb al-Salāh under the tutorship of Imām Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan (رحمه الله). The latter said to him, "Go and study the science of ḥadīth." The great Imām Muḥammad (رحمه الله) had noticed that the subject of ḥadīth was more suitable for his temperament. Imām Bukhārī (رحمه الله) accepted the advice of his teacher and began studying ḥadīth. He excelled in this field to the extent that he surpassed all the scholars of ḥadīth.

It is essential for the student not to sit very close to the teacher at the time of the lesson where there is no need for this. He should sit at a distance of one bow as there is more respect in this.

The student should refrain from evil character attributes as these are very harmful for him like dogs. Nabī ﷺ said, "The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture." A person learns by means of an angel.

The evil attributes are mentioned in the books of character. We cannot delve into the details here.

The student should abstain from pride as knowledge and pride do not go hand in hand.

It is said,

*Knowledge is war for the proud youth,
As flood is a war for the high place.*

(Just as a flood destroys a tall house, similarly, does pride destroy the incumbent student.)

Effort, Punctuality and Zeal

It is highly incumbent for the student to strive, be punctual and constant in seeking knowledge. An indication is made to this in the Qur'an by the following verses:

*"O Yahyā, hold the book firmly."*²⁴

*"Those who strive for Our sake, We guide them to Our paths."*²⁵

It has been said,

*I achieved progress through my own efforts, not with the efforts of others,
Fate cannot achieve anything unless an effort is attached to it.*

Many a slave has become like a free man due to his efforts,

²⁴ Sūrah Maryam, verse 12.

²⁵ Sūrah Ānkabūt, verse 69.

*And many a free man has become like a slave due to lack of zeal.*²⁶

There is a proverb,

Whoever seeks a thing and strives for it will achieve it,

And whoever knocks on the door and knocks very hard, will certainly enter.

A person achieves his wishes according to his efforts.

Three people are in dire need of earnestly striving for knowledge and jurisprudence: the student, the teacher and the father if he is alive.

My teacher, Sheikh Sadīdud-dīn Ash-Shīrāzī (رحمه الله) quoted the following verses of Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī (رحمه الله) to me:

²⁶ In some printed versions of this book, these verses have been mentioned at the end of the previous chapter.

Effort simplifies every difficult task
just as an effort opens every locked door.
From the creation of Allāh, the one most
entitled to congratulations
is the one who has courage in spite of difficult
circumstances.

The proof of Allāh's decree and command
is that the intelligent one is living a difficult life
while the fool is enjoying luxury.

But the one who is granted complete
intelligence is deprived of wealth.

These are two opposites, wealth and knowledge
cannot combine.

These verses were also recited to me:

If you desire to become a great jurist and
debater without any effort
then this is one of the many kinds of insanity.
When wealth cannot be earned without hard
work,
how can knowledge be attained without
striving?

Abū At-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbī said,

I have not seen a severer defect in people
That in spite of having the ability, they leave
work undone (because of laxity).

The student should remain awake at night as a poet
says,

Man reaches heights according to his effort.

Whoever wants to reach heights should stay
awake during the nights.

(What foolishness is this that) you seek honour
and yet you sleep the night through.

The one who seeks pearls dives into the ocean.

Only after having a firm resolve can man reach
great heights.

Remaining awake at nights becomes a means of
honour for a person.

O Allāh, the Master of all Masters, I discarded
sleep merely for Your pleasure.

Whoever seeks heights without striving,

Is wasting his life in seeking something
impossible.

Therefore grant me the ability to gain knowledge and make me reach great heights.

A proverb says, "Engage yourself in educational activities the whole night, you will achieve your desires."

I have presented similar sentiments in a couplet:

Whoever wants to see all his desires being fulfilled, should firstly remain awake at night and engage himself in knowledge.

He should eat less as well in order to achieve the fruits of knowledge. If a person wants to create perfection in himself, this is the only way.

The one who stays awake at night knows that during the day he feels alert and fresh.

It is incumbent on the student to revise his lessons during the first and last parts of the night because the time between Maghrib and Íshā and the time of Tahajjud is most blessed.

It is mentioned in a poem:

O student, inculcate piety and abstain from excessive sleep and abandon filling your belly.

Be punctual in your lessons because punctuality is what will make you achieve heights in knowledge.

The student should value the strength and energy of his youthful days. It has been said,

Achieving one's aim is according to one's effort.

The one who has an aim should stand up at night.

Value your youth because the days of youth do not last perpetually.

However, one should not strive so much that it weakens one's body and one cannot do any further work. Be moderate in striving because moderation is the best quality in all actions.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "It is testing to traverse the path of Dīn. Therefore traverse this path with moderation.

Do not make the worship of Allāh a burden upon yourself because the one who is lost on a journey neither reaches his destination nor maintains his conveyance."

Nabī ﷺ said that the soul is a conveyance and one should be gentle with it.

The student should maintain his zeal and enthusiasm for knowledge. Zeal is like a bird. Just as a bird flies with its wings, so too does a person fly to great heights with his zeal.

Abū At-Tayyib says,

*Regarding firm resolutions and lofty character,
zeal and enthusiasm play a major role,
Because the person with a lack of zeal regards
something insignificant as major while the
person with great enthusiasm does not even
glance at major things.*

In order to achieve something, the basic factor is effort and high enthusiasm. For instance, if a person

makes a firm resolve of memorizing all the books of Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله), strives and remains punctual, he will memorize most of them or at least half of them (if he cannot memorize all of them.)

If he has enthusiasm but he does not strive or he strives but he does not possess any zeal, he will achieve very little knowledge.

Sheikh Radīud-dīn An-Nīsābūrī (رحمه الله) has mentioned the following in his book, Makārimul Akhlāq:

When Dhul Qarnain intended to travel in order to conquer the east and west, he consulted the sages and said, "How can I travel for this amount of kingdom because the world is paltry and temporary and the things of this world are despised. This is not high enthusiasm." The sages replied, "Travel in order to obtain the kingdom of the world and the hereafter." He said, "That is much better."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Indeed Allāh loves high spirits in all matters and He dislikes lack of zeal."

Do not be hasty in your work. Do it with ease for continuity is essential for removing crookedness and reforming corruption.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) said to Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله), "You were dull headed but your continuous effort made you progress. Always abstain from laziness for this is a misfortune and great calamity."

Imām Abū Naṣr Aṣ-Ṣaffār Al-Anṣārī²⁷ (رحمه الله) said,

*O soul, do not be slack in acts of virtue, justice and doing favours,
for every person who does good deeds is delighted while the lazy ones are in calamity and misfortune.*

²⁷. He was Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad from the people of Bukhārā. He was of the scholars of the fourth century of Hijrah.

I have also composed a couplet in this regard:

O my soul, abandon laziness and laxity otherwise you will be disgraced.

I have not seen a lazy person obtaining anything except regret and deprivation of hopes.

It has been said,

Due to laziness, a person has to undergo shame, helplessness and regret.

When researching to remove some doubt, do not be lazy because laziness causes a decrease in knowledge and most of it is left out. Therefore obtain whatever amount of knowledge one can without any assistance. Ask the learned whatever is beyond your understanding.

It has been said that laziness in obtaining knowledge is caused by a lack of pondering in knowledge and its virtues. Therefore the student should tire himself out in striving and in continuous pondering over the

virtues of knowledge for knowledge remains while wealth diminishes.

Amīrul Mu'minīn Ālī ؑ said,

We are pleased with the decree of Allāh regarding us, that we have knowledge and our enemies have wealth.

Verily wealth will soon perish while knowledge will remain perpetually.

Beneficial knowledge endows one with abundant praises and this will remain even after one's death because it is an eternal life.

Imām Zahīrud-dīn Hasan Ibn Ālī (رحمه الله), well-known as Marghīnānī, the Muftī of the Imāms, recited the following verse to us:

The ignorant are dead even before their death.

The learned remain alive (through their knowledge) even after they have passed away.

Imām Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) recited to me the following:

The life of an ignorant one is like death.

Before entering the grave, their bodies are like graves for their spirits.

The one who did not live with knowledge, is not anything less than death.

Such a person will not be resurrected with the scholars.

A poet²⁸ said,

The one beautified with knowledge is alive even after his death.

And even after his body is fragmented under the sand.

The ignorant one, in spite of walking on the earth is like a dead person.

He thinks he is alive whereas he is a non-entity.

Another poet said,

²⁸ This is a couplet of Abū Muḥammad An-Nahwī.

Knowledge is the life of the heart. Therefore value it.

Ignorance is the death of the heart. Therefore abstain from it.

My teacher, Sheikh Burhānūd-dīn (رحمه الله) recited the following poetry to me:

The status of the scholar is the highest of all stages. Besides this stage, all other stages are non-entities.

The honour of the scholar remains and after death also it does not perish. There is hope of it being increased in the hereafter.

As for the ignoramus, he enters the sand after death.

The leaders of large armies and large countries cannot reach the honour of the scholars.

I will expound to you some of the virtues of knowledge. Therefore listen to them although it is impossible to enlist all the virtues.

Knowledge is a complete and perfect light

which even guides the blind to the right path.

The ignoramus remains floundering in extreme darkness throughout his life.

It is a high summit. Whoever seeks refuge in it, is saved like those who take refuge on the summits of high mountains.

He is saved from all kinds of calamities while the people around him are negligent.

He moves around safely without any fear on difficult paths.

The scholar becomes a means of intercession for the sinner who is entitled to end up in the fire, the worst of consequences.

All hopes are attached to knowledge and whoever obtains it, has achieved all his aims.

O one of intelligence, knowledge is a very lofty stage. After achieving it, the deprivation of all other stages is insignificant.

If you did not obtain the world and its luxurious life, then do not be perturbed for knowledge is the best gift.

A poet said,

When knowledge is the cause of tremendous honour, the science of jurisprudence is more entitled to respect.

There are many good smells but they are unlike musk and there are many birds but which one can reach the heights of the falcon.

These verses were also recited to me,

The best knowledge which you want to obtain is jurisprudence.

Whoever is involved in teaching, his feats cannot be obliterated.

Obtain the knowledge of that which you do not know.

Because the beginning of knowledge is virtue as well as its ending.

This amount of virtue of knowledge is sufficient that it spurs one to obtain more knowledge.

Sometimes laziness is created in a person due to the

moisture of phlegm. The cure for this is to decrease one's intake of food.

It has been said that seventy physicians are unanimous on the fact that forgetfulness is caused by excessive phlegm, excessive phlegm is caused by drinking too much water and drinking too much water is caused by an immoderate appetite. Dry bread burns off phlegm and so does eating raisins in the morning on an empty stomach. However, one should not eat too many as this will cause drinking excessive water which will increase the phlegm.

Using the miswāk also decreases phlegm, increases the memory and eloquence. It is a lofty sunnat that increases the reward of one's ṣalāh and recitation of the Qur'ān. Vomitting also decreases phlegm and moisture. The method of decreasing one's appetite is to ponder over the benefits of eating less. The benefits are: good health, chastity and giving preference to others.

A poet has said,

It is an extremely defective character trait to be unfortunate due to eating.

Nabī ﷺ said, "Allāh ﷻ dislikes three people without them having committed any crime, one who is a glutton, the miser and the arrogant one."

Ponder over the harms of excessive eating. Excessive eating causes illnesses and laziness. It has therefore been said that the belly destroys the intelligence.

It has been reported that Jālīnūs²⁹ said, "The pomegranate has complete benefit. Fish has excessive harms while a small amount of fish is better than a large amount of pomegranates."

Excessive eating also causes a waste of wealth and eating more than one's fill is completely harmful. One is entitled to punishment in the hereafter for it.

²⁹ He was a Greek physician who was born in 129 C.E. and died in 199 C.E.

The glutton is despised by people.

The method of decreasing one's appetite is to eat greasy foods and to eat the most delectable dishes first.

Do not eat before one is hungry. Yes, if there is a correct reason for eating extra, it is permissible, e.g. to gain strength for fasting, ṣalāh and difficult tasks.

The Beginning of the Lesson, its Amount and Sequence

Our teacher, Sheikhul Islām Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) used to begin the lesson on a Wednesday. He used to narrate a hadīth regarding this and use it as proof. He quoted Rasūlullāh ﷺ as saying, "Any task that is initiated on a Wednesday will most certainly reach completion." His (Sheikhul Islām's) father used to do the same.

Sheikhul Islām (رحمه الله) used to narrate this hadīth from his teacher, Sheikh Qiwāmud-dīn³⁰ Ahmad Ibn Àbdir Rashīd (رحمه الله).

I heard from authentic sources that Sheikh Yūsuf Al-Hamdḥānī³¹ (رحمه الله) used to begin all good acts on a

³⁰ He was a jurist of Bukhārā from among the scholars of the sixth century of hijrah.

³¹ Yūsuf Ibn Ayyūb Al-Hamdḥānī was an ascetic orator of Baghdad who later settled in Marw. He has written several works in

Wednesday. This is because light was created on Wednesday. It is a day of misfortune for the disbelievers. Hence it should be blessed for the believers.³²

As for the duration of the lesson at the outset, Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) used to narrate from Qādī Ūmar Ibn Abī Bakr Az-Zaranjarī (رحمه الله) who quoted the Mashāikh as saying, "For the beginner, the duration of the lesson should be that much whereby he can learn the lesson and revise it twice at a moderate pace. There should be a slight increase everyday to the extent that even if it becomes a bit lengthy, the student should be able to learn the lesson and revise it twice. The increase should be gradual and moderate.

However, if the lesson is lengthy at the beginning whereby he requires to revise it ten times, it will be

Taṣawwuf. He passed away in 535 A.H. (1140 C.E.)

³² Moulānā Àbdul Hayy has clarified this subject in his 'Al-Fawā'idul Bahīyah', p. 143.

the same at the end because the student becomes accustomed to that and he will not be able to discard that revision except with great effort. It has been said that the lesson should be brief but revision should be intensive.

The inception should be something that the student can easily understand. Imām Sharafud-dīn Al-Úqailī (رحمه الله) used to say, "In my opinion, the correct procedure is the one adopted by our Mashāikh. They chose for the beginner small books that were a summary of the voluminous ones because it is easier to understand and learn them. These books would not create boredom and they were easily accessible.

After learning and revising the lesson, the student should note down the summary of it as this is extremely beneficial.

The student should not write down something he does not understand as this will dull his mind, destroy his intellect and waste his time.

He should endeavour to understand the lesson from the teacher, ponder and reflect over it and revise it excessively. If the lesson is short but the revision and pondering is intensive, he will understand and grasp much more.

It has been said that learning two letters is better than listening to pages of lessons and understanding two letters is better than learning two lines.

If the student becomes lax in understanding the lesson and he does not strive once or twice, he will become accustomed to this. As a result, he will not even understand simple things. He should therefore endeavour to strive diligently, supplicate to Allāh ﷻ and entreat Him for He is the One who answers the call and does not disappoint the one who has hope in Him.

Sheikh Qiwāmud-dīn Hammād Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Ismā'il As-Saffār Al-Ansārī (رحمه الله) quoted the following poem of Qādī Al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Ash-Shajarī (رحمه الله) to us,

Serve knowledge for the amount of benefit you will derive from it and be constant in your lessons with the assistance of the Praiseworthy One.

Repeat whatever you have learnt and revise it thoroughly,

So that you do not forget it. Then write it down so that you can refer to it and teach it always.

After having learnt something thoroughly to the extent that one is sure of not forgetting it, strive to learn something new.

Continue revising the previous work while your knowledge continues to increase.

In order to revive your knowledge, convey its benefit to the people and do not remain aloof from the intellectuals.

If you conceal knowledge, you will certainly forget it and you will become nothing but an ignorant fool.

On the day of Judgement you will be bridled with fire and you will be incinerated in a severe punishment.

It is highly essential for the student to converse with the people of knowledge and debate the issues. However, it is necessary that these discussions and debates be done with moderation, careful thought and pondering. He should abstain from controversy and anger because debates and discussions are in actual fact consultations and consultations are meant to extract the truth from the varied opinions. Something correct can only be ascertained if one ponders carefully with moderation. Nothing can be achieved by quarrelling and venting one's anger.

If one's intention at the time of discussion is to silence the other party and overpower him, this is not permissible. Discussions and debates are only permissible to expose the truth. To trick and use a stratagem is not permissible except if the opposition is obstinate and not the seeker of truth.

When Muḥammad Ibn Yahyā³³ (رحمه الله) was faced

³³ This probably refers to the jurist Abū Abdillāh Al-Jurjānī (397 A.H.) as there were many scholars with the name Muḥammad Ibn Yahyā. Sheikh Burhānud-dīn has counted him among the Ashābut-Takhrīj.

with any problem and he did not have an answer for it, he would say, "Your opinion is binding and I will ponder over it. And there is a being more learned above every learned one." (Therefore, ask the opinion of others as well.)

Debating and discussing have more benefit than mere revision because they provide the benefit of revision as well as an increase in one's knowledge.

It has been said that to debate for a while is better than revising for a month if the debate is done with a person of moderate temperament who is good-natured.

Abstain from discussing with an obstinate person who is not good natured because temperaments are diverse and character traits are transitive. One is greatly affected by company.

The poem which Khalīl Ibn Ahmad (رحمه الله) has mentioned has tremendous benefits. It has been said,

One of the conditions of knowledge is that it should be served.

Whoever serves it, will be served by all the people.

The student should be pondering over the delicate aspects of knowledge all the time and make this a habit of his. The finer points of knowledge can only be attained by pondering. Therefore it has been said, "Ponder and you will achieve."

It is very essential to ponder before speaking so that one's speech is correct. Speech is like an arrow. It has to be straightened so that one can hit the target correctly. In the subject of the principles of jurisprudence, it has been said that pondering and contemplating is extremely essential for the jurist who debates.

The fountain-head of intelligence is verification and pondering. A poet says,

I advise you of five things when speaking on condition you obey the kind one advising you.

Do not be heedless of the need for speech, its time, condition, amount and place. Take all these factors into consideration before speaking.

The student should seek benefit from all the people at all times and in all conditions. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Wisdom is the lost commodity of a believer. He should take it wherever he finds it." A proverb says, "Take what is pure and leave what is murky."

I heard Imām Fakhrud-dīn Kāshānī (رحمه الله) saying, "A slave girl of Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) was kept as a trust by Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله). He asked her, "Do you at this time remember anything of the jurisprudence of Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله)?" She replied in the negative and said, "Except that he used to revise continuously and say that the portion of inheritance (sahmud-dūr) falls away." Imām Muḥammad (رحمه الله) learnt this mas'alah from her. He was having difficulty with this mas'alah and after hearing this statement, all his

objections were answered. This indicates that seeking benefit is possible from any person."

When Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) was asked how he obtained so much knowledge, he replied, "I never spurned the opportunity of benefitting from anyone nor was I miserly in granting benefit to others."

Àbdullāh Ibn Àbbās ؓ was asked how he obtained knowledge. He replied, "By a tongue that asks frequently and by a heart that understands thoroughly."

In the previous era, the student used to be called (ما تقول) – what do you say – because the students used to frequently ask, "What is your opinion regarding this mas'alah?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رحمه الله) achieved a great amount of knowledge of jurisprudence by discussion in his shop while he was a cloth merchant.

This indicates that seeking knowledge is possible while one is earning a living.

Abū Hafs Al-Kabīr (رحمه الله) used to revise his knowledge while earning a living. If a student has to earn to support his family; he should earn while at the same time, he should revise and discuss his knowledge without becoming lax.

As long as one's intellect and body are intact, there is no excuse for not learning and seeking knowledge. A person cannot be poorer than what Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) was and his poverty did not prevent him from studying. If one has wealth, the best avenue for spending it is in the path of knowledge. In this way, wealth is a bounty for a pious man.

A scholar was asked how he obtained knowledge. He replied, "Due to my wealthy father who spent on the people of knowledge and virtue." This is a cause of increase in knowledge because it is expressing gratitude on the bounties of intelligence and knowledge. Expressing thanks is a cause of earning

more.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) said, "I obtained knowledge by praise and gratitude. Whenever I understood any mas'alah of fiqh or attained the wisdom of some delicate issue, I praised Allāh. As a result, my knowledge increased."

In this way the student should be thankful with his tongue, heart, limbs and wealth. He should regard his understanding and knowledge to be gifts from Allāh ﷻ. He should continue supplicating to Allāh ﷻ to grant him guidance and humbly implore Him, for Allāh ﷻ is the One who grants guidance to those who seek it.

The people of the truth – the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamā'ah – sought the truth from Allāh ﷻ, the clear guiding truth that protects one. Allāh ﷻ guided them and protected them from misguidance.

The misguided ones trusted their opinions and intelligence. They sought the truth from the helpless

creation, namely intelligence. Intelligence cannot perceive everything just as the sight cannot see everything. They were veiled off from the truth and could not perceive the truth as a result. They themselves were misguided and misled others too.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "The heedless one is one who practises on his negligence while the intelligent one practises on his intelligence." Practising on one's intelligence firstly means to recognize one's helplessness. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "The one who recognizes himself, recognizes his Lord." Do not ever rely on your self or your intelligence. Repose your trust solely in Allāh and seek the truth and guidance from Him alone. Whoever reposes his trust in Allāh, He is sufficient for him and will guide him to the straight path.

Whoever has abundant wealth should not be miserly. He should seek refuge in Allāh from miserliness.

Nabī ﷺ said, "What illness can be worse than miserliness."

The father of Shamsul Aimmah Al-Halwānī (رحمه الله) was a very poor man. He used to sell sweetmeats. He used to feed the jurists and say, "Supplicate for my son." Due to the blessing of his generosity, good thoughts, kindness and imploring to Allāh ﷻ, his son achieved a very lofty stage of knowledge.

He used to buy books and have copies of them made. This was a tremendous assistance in the path of knowledge and jurisprudence.

Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله) had abundant wealth. He had three hundred supervisors appointed to oversee his wealth. He spent all his wealth on knowledge and jurisprudence to the extent that he did not have even one good cloth left with himself. When Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) saw him in tattered clothes, he sent some elegant garments for him. However, Imām Muḥammad (رحمه الله) did not accept them and said, "You were given these bounties before and I will also receive them later." Although it is sunnah to accept gifts, he probably did

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not accept the gift as it was a disgrace for himself.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "A believer should not disgrace himself."

It has been narrated that Fakhrul Islam Irsābandī (رحمه الله) gathered the peels of a melon that was lying in an empty place. He ate the peels. A slave girl, who was watching him, narrated the incident to her master who invited him to a meal. He did not accept this invitation for the very same reason, that is, he did not want to disgrace himself.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Keep away from greed because it will reveal the secret of your need."

The student should not be miserly with his wealth but should spend it on himself and on others.

Nabī ﷺ said, "The fear of poverty has made all the people the victims of poverty."

In the previous era, the scholars would learn a

profession first and then seek knowledge so that they do not crave for the wealth of the people.

A wise saying goes thus: The one who craves the wealth of others is afflicted with poverty. If a scholar is greedy, he cannot maintain the dignity and sanctity of knowledge nor will he speak the truth. It is for this reason that Rasūlullāh ﷺ sought refuge from it by saying, "I seek refuge from that greed which leads to defects."

The believer should only have hope in Allāh and he should fear no one besides Him. This is what indicates having caution or being careless regarding the limits set by Allāh. Whoever disobeys Allāh in fear of the creation has in fact displayed the fear of the creation. If one does not disobey Allāh due to the fear of the creation and he observes the limits of Sharī'ah, has not displayed the fear of creation but has in fact feared Allāh. The same principle applies to hope.

The student should also continuously revise his work because knowledge will not be firmly embedded in

his heart unless he revises thoroughly. He should revise the previous day's lesson five times, the lesson of the day before that four times, the one before that three times, the one preceding that two times and the one before that once. This is an excellent way of preserving one's knowledge.

The revision of the lesson should not be done silently as the lesson and the revision should be done with forcefulness and alertness. However, he should not raise his voice to the extent that he becomes exhausted and abandons the revision. The best path is the one of moderation.

It is reported that Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) used to discuss jurisprudence with the jurists with great energy and vivacity. His son-in-law used to be amazed by this and say, "I know that he is starving for five days. In spite of that, he is discussing with such strength and briskness."

The student should not abandon his studies for a period for it is a great calamity. Our teacher, Sheikh

Burhān-ud-dīn (رحمه الله) used to say, "I surpassed all my colleagues because I never left my studies for any period."

He used to narrate from Sheikh Isbījābī³⁴ (رحمه الله) that he had to undergo a gap in his studies for a period of twelve years due to the revolution that occurred in the country. He took his companion and secretly went to a place where they could continue their studies for those twelve years. His companion became the Sheikhul Islām of the Shāfi'īs and he (Sheikh Isbījābī) was also a Shāfi'ī.

Our teacher, Fakhrul Islam Qādī Khān (رحمه الله) used to say, "It is essential for a jurist to memorize one book of jurisprudence so that it becomes easy for him when he hears any mas'alah, to learn it."

³⁴ Sheikhul Islām Ālī Ibn Muḥammad Isbījābī was a celebrated jurist of his time. He was the teacher of Sheikh Burhanud-dīn, the author of Al-Hidāyah. He passed away in Samarqand in 535 A.H. (1140. C.E.).

Trust

During his period of study, the student should repose his trust in Allāh. He should not concern himself in earning and pre-occupy himself in doing so.

Imām Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله) has narrated from the Sahābī, Àbdullāh Ibnul Hārith ؓ that whoever learns jurisprudence for the sake of Allāh' Dīn, Allāh ؓ is sufficient for him. He will provide him sustenance from sources which he cannot imagine.

The one who is preoccupied in food and clothing can never reach good morals and lofty attributes. A poet says³⁵,

Leave excellent character attributes and do not travel to achieve them.

³⁵ This is a couplet of the poet Haṭī'ah in which he satirizes Zabarqān Ibn Badr. Úmar ؓ later prohibited Haṭī'ah from ridiculing the Muslims. See "Ad-Dīwān, p. 284.

Remain sitting in your place because you are more concerned about food and clothing.

A person asked the son of Mansūr Al-Hallāj (رحمه الله), to advise him. He replied, "If you do not occupy yourself in something (virtuous), it (your *nafs*) will become preoccupied itself (in evil)."

It is therefore essential for every person to turn his carnal self towards good deeds so that it does not become embroiled in evil acts. The intelligent person does not pay much attention to the matters of the world because worry and grief cannot repel any calamity. Instead of being beneficial, they harm the heart, body and intelligence and they disturb a person's acts of virtue. One should strive for the hereafter because this is beneficial for him. As for the statement of Nabī ؓ, "Some sins cannot be effaced except making an effort to earn a livelihood," it refers to that much of effort whereby one acts of virtue are not affected and no harm is caused to one's concentration in ṣalāh. Such an amount of concern is regarded as an act of the hereafter.

It is essential for the student to decrease his attachment to worldly matters as much as possible. It is for this reason that the scholars chose to lead the life of travellers.

One has to bear the toils and hardships during the journey of knowledge as mentioned by Mūsā عليه السلام, "We have indeed experienced tremendous fatigue in this journey of ours." He did not mention this regarding any other journey of his.

This indicates that the journey in the quest for knowledge is not free of toil because seeking knowledge is a great task. According to most scholars, it is more virtuous than jihād. Reward accrues according to the amount of exertion and toil. Whoever bears the exertion patiently, will perceive the taste of knowledge which surpasses all the delights of this world.

It is for this very reason that when Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله) used to remain awake at nights and his difficult matters used to be

solved, he would say, "Do the princes ever taste these delights?"

The student should neither turn his attention towards anything else nor should he shun jurisprudence.

Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله) said, "This profession of ours is from the cradle to the grave. Whoever does not have this intention, should not even make a beginning."

The jurist, Ibrāhīm Ibnul Jarrāh³⁶ (رحمه الله) went to visit Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) who was on his deathbed and was making a great sacrifice. Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) asked the visitor, "Is performing *ramī* (stoning the shayṭān) mounted better or while

* Ibrāhīm Ibnul Jarrāh Ibn Ṣabīḥ Al-Māzinī was originally from Kufah and later settled in Egypt where he passed away in 217 A.H. (831 C.E.). He was a Ḥanafī jurist who studied under Imām Abū Yūsuf. He was appointed the chief justice of Egypt in 205 A.H.

walking?" Ibrāhīm (رحمه الله) did not know the answer. Imām Abū Yūsuf (رحمه الله) then himself provided the answer.³⁷

A jurist should in this manner be pre-occupied all the time in jurisprudential matters. It is only then that he will find great enjoyment in it.

Someone saw Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan (رحمه الله) in a dream after he had passed away. He was asked what his condition was when he was about to depart from this world. Imām Muḥammad (رحمه الله) replied, "I was busy pondering over the mas'alah of the mukātab (slave) and did not even realize that my soul was being removed."

It is reported that Imām Muḥammad (رحمه الله) said at

³⁷ The answer was that when making du'ā, ramī performed on foot is better and where one does not stand to recite any du'ās, it is better to be mounted.

the end of his life, "The masā'il of the mukātab kept me pre-occupied from preparing for this day (death)." He said this out of humility.

The Time for Seeking Knowledge

It is said that the time for studying is from the cradle to the grave. Imām Hasan Ibn Ziyād³⁸ (رحمه الله) began studying jurisprudence at the age of eighty. He did not lie on his bed for forty years and he issued legal verdicts thereafter for forty years.

The most appropriate time is the beginning of one's youth. The time of tahajjud and the time between Maghrib and Íshā are also suitable. The student should be engrossed all the time in studying. When he becomes bored of one subject, he should begin another.

When Àbdullāh Ibn Àbbās³⁹ ﷺ used to become

³⁸ Al-Hasan Ibn Ziyād Al-Lu'lu'ī was a pearl merchant from Kufah. He was a companion of Imām Abū Hanīfah. He was extremely intelligent and sharp-witted. He was the chief justice of Kufah. He passed away in 204 A.H. (819 C.E.).

³⁹ The son of Nabī's ﷺ uncle. He was conferred the title of Hibrul Ummah and Tarjumānul Qur'ān – the most learned person of this ummah and the interpreter of the Qur'ān. He would often divide his

weary of scholastic theology (*ilmul kalām*), he used to say, "Now bring the anthology of the poets."

Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Hasan (رحمه الله) never used to sleep at night. He would keep a stack of books next to himself. After becoming weary of the books of one subject, he would begin another subject. He also placed some water next to himself in order to repel his sleep with the water. He used to say, "Indeed sleep has heat."

time by setting aside a day for fiqh, a day for tafsīr, a day for maghāzī – jihād campaigns of Nabī ﷺ and a day for poetry. He had a remarkable ability to memorize. He passed away in 68 A.H. (697 C.E.).

Compassion and Advice

The scholar should be compassionate and seek good for others without any jealousy. Jealousy is harmful. Our teacher, Sheikhul Islām Burhānud-dīn (رحمه الله) used to say, "The scholars said that the son of an ālim will also be an ālim because the ālim wants his student to be knowledgeable of the Qur'ān. Due to the blessing of his belief and his compassion, his son will also become learned."⁴⁰

Abul Hasan⁴¹ (رحمه الله) used to narrate that Imām Àbdul Àzīz Ibn Úmar⁴² (رحمه الله) used to set aside the time of *duhā*⁴³ for teaching his two sons, Husāmud-

⁴⁰ This is no hard and fast rule. In fact, the opposite occurs more often.

⁴¹ This refers to Àlī Ibn Abī Bakr, the author of *Al-Hidāyah* and the teacher of Burhānul Islām Az-Zarnūjī.

⁴² He was a Hanafī jurist of the fifth Hijrah century.

⁴³ The time when the sun rises high in the morning.

dīn⁴⁴ (رحمه الله) and Tājud-dīn (رحمه الله) after completing all his other lessons.

The two sons used to say, "We used to be weary and bored at that time." Their father used to say, "The travellers and the children of the elders come to me from different parts of the earth. Therefore I have to give preference to their lessons. Due to his compassion, his two sons surpassed all the jurists of the cities in that era.

The student should not dispute and quarrel with anyone as this wastes his time. It has been said that the one who does a favour will receive the reward of his favour while the evil person will certainly taste the effects of his evil.

Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr⁴⁵ (رحمه الله) more

⁴⁴ He was Úmar Ibn Àbdil Àzīz, a Hanafī jurist who wrote several books of jurisprudence. He was the teacher of the author of *Al-Hidāyah*. He was martyred in 536 A.H. (1141 C.E.).

⁴⁵ He was a celebrated scholar, jurist, orator and writer. He was also the muftī of Bukhārā. He passed away in 573 A.H. (1177 C.E.).

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The two sons used to say, "We used to be weary and bored at that time." Their father used to say, "The travellers and the children of the elders come to me from different parts of the earth. Therefore I have to give preference to their lessons. Due to his compassion, his two sons surpassed all the jurists of the cities in that era.

The student should not dispute and quarrel with anyone as this wastes his time. It has been said that the one who does a favour will receive the reward of his favour while the evil person will certainly taste the effects of his evil.

Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr⁴⁵ (رحمه الله) more

⁴⁴ He was Úmar Ibn Àbdil Àzīz, a Hanafī jurist who wrote several books of jurisprudence. He was the teacher of the author of Al-Hidāyah. He was martyred in 536 A.H. (1141 C.E.).

⁴⁵ He was a celebrated scholar, jurist, orator and writer. He was also the muftī of Bukhārā. He passed away in 573 A.H. (1177 C.E.).

popularly known as Khāharzādah said that Sultānus Shari'at Yūsuf Hamdhānī (رحمه الله) recited the following couplet to them,

You do not have to punish the evil one for his act.

Very soon he will be recompensed for the action he is performing.

Whoever has the intention of exacting revenge from his enemy should repeatedly recite this couplet.

The following verse was recited to me,

*When you intend to disgrace your enemy,
destroy him in grief and burn him in anxiety,
seek heights and increase your search for
knowledge,*

*for the one whose knowledge increases, the grief
of his enviers increases.*

Remain engaged in your expediencies and do not be overly concerned with overpowering your enemy.

When you endeavour to perfect yourself, your enemy will automatically be subdued. Abstain from enmity for it will disgrace you and waste your time. Forbearance is extremely essential especially towards the foolish.

Isā ﷺ said, "Bear patiently one foolish act of the fool and you will receive ten rewards."

A poet said,

*I tested the people for generations and found no
one except those who are deceitful and those
who hate.*

*I did not see a worse calamity than having
enmity for people.*

*I have tasted many a bitter thing but I have not
tasted anything more bitter than begging.*

Beware, do not have evil thoughts about any believer for this is the root cause of enmity. It is not permissible to harbour evil thoughts because Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Harbour good thoughts for the believers." According to the statement of Abut

Tayyib, this is caused by an evil intention and a rotten inside:

When the conduct of a person becomes evil, his thoughts also deteriorate.

His habitual thoughts make him have enmity for his lovers by means of the statements of his enemies.

He then remains in the darkness of doubt.

The following couplet was also recited to me,

Abstain from evil and do not even intend it.

Continue increasing your good conduct.

You will be saved from every evil plan of your enemy. When he plans treachery, do not intend the same for him.

Abul Fath Al-Bustī said,

An intelligent person cannot remain safe from an ignorant one.

The latter will distress him due to oppression and harassment.

Instead of fighting, the scholar should choose peace.

If the ignorant one screams, he should remain silent.

Seeking Benefit

The student should seek benefit all the time in order to achieve erudition and perfection in knowledge. The method of benefit is that he should keep a notebook with him all the time in order to note down whatever educational benefit he derives from the scholars.

Therefore it has been said that if a person memorizes something, it is possible that he will forget it but if he notes it down, it will remain preserved.

Knowledge is that which is heard from the mouths of the scholars because they used to preserve the best of whatever they heard. Whatever they uttered was the best of their memorized facts.

I heard from Sheikh Zaynul Islām (رحمه الله) who was more popularly known as Al-Adīb Al-Ustādh, quoting Hilāl Ibn Zayd Ibn Yasār ؓ saying, "I saw Rasūlullāh ؐ explaining the facts of knowledge and

wisdom to his companions. I asked, 'O Messenger of Allāh, repeat for me whatever you told them.' He asked me if I had some paper. I replied in the negative. Nabī ؐ said, 'O Hilāl, never be without paper because there is goodness in it and its owner till the day of Judgement.'"

Sheikh Husāmud-dīn (رحمه الله) advised his son, Shamsud-dīn⁴⁶ (رحمه الله) to memorize a little knowledge and wisdom daily. This paltry amount will soon become plenty.

Isām Ibn Yūsuf (رحمه الله) bought a pen for one gold coin in order to note down immediately whatever he heard. Life is very brief and knowledge is excessive in amount. Therefore the student should never waste his time and value the nights and his hours of solitude.

⁴⁶ He was Muḥammad Ibn Ūmar Ibn Àbdil Àzīz, a leading scholar of Bukhārā. He passed away in 566 A.H. (1170 C.E.).

Yahyā Ibn Mu'ādh Ar-Rāzī⁴⁷ (رحمه الله) used to say, "The night is long, therefore do not shorten it with your sleep. The day is bright, therefore do not darken it with your sins."

Value the scholars and continue seeking benefit from them because whatever is missed cannot be achieved later. Our teacher, Sheikhul Islām (رحمه الله), mentioned in his book, "I met many scholars but did not take full benefit from them (due to not recognizing the depth of their knowledge)."

I recite this verse regarding these very lost opportunities:

I regret severely the wasting of these valuable moments.

It is very difficult to recover whatever has passed and been lost.

⁴⁷ He was a renowned orator and ascetic of Rayy. Many sentences of wisdom are attributed to him. He passed away in Nīsābūr in 258 A.H. (872 C.E.).

Alī (عليه السلام) said, "When you do some work, become fully engrossed in it. It is the greatest disgrace and misfortune to turn away from the knowledge of Allāh (الله). Seek refuge from it day and night."

It is highly essential for the student to endure hardships and disgrace in the path of knowledge. Flattery is extremely disliked except when seeking knowledge because it is necessary for the student to humble himself before the teacher, the companions and others in order to benefit from them.

It has been said, "Knowledge is honour without any disgrace in it and it cannot be achieved except with disgrace bereft of honour."

A poet said,

I see that you desire to grant honour to your self.

You cannot achieve honour without experiencing some disgrace.

Piety While Studying

Some people have narrated a hadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in this regard that he said, "Whoever is not cautious of abstaining from sin during his studies, Allāh ﷻ will test him with one of three things: he will grant him death during his youth, or he will flounder around the villages or he will experience the disgrace of serving the king." The greater the piety of the student, the more beneficial will his knowledge be, his studies will be easier and its benefits will be increased.

Part of perfect piety is to refrain from eating excessively, sleeping excessively, and speaking non-beneficial things excessively. If possible, abstain from eating the food of the market-places because such food contains impurities, distances one from the dhikr of Allāh ﷻ and is more likely to cause negligence. Also, the sight of the poor falls on it while they are unable to purchase it. This causes them distress as a result of which, its blessing decreases.

It has been narrated about Sheikh Muḥammad Ibnul Jaḥīl Muḥammad Ibnul Fadl⁴⁸ (رحمه الله) that he never ate the food of the market-place during his student days. His father lived in a nearby village. He would bring his food every Friday. One day his father saw the bread of the shop in his son's room. He was so upset with him that he stopped conversing with him. The son replied that neither did he buy it nor was he pleased with it. It was his colleague who had brought it. His father said, "Had you been cautious and pious, your friend would not have had the audacity to do this."

This was the condition of their piety. It is for this reason that they gained knowledge, propagated it and their names will remain till Qiyāmah.

An ascetic jurist advised a student, "Abstain from backbiting and do not sit with people who gossip. Whoever speaks a lot, will steal the years of your life

⁴⁸ He was a great Imām and excellent scholar upon whose narrations the people relied. He passed away in 381 A.H. (991 C.E.).

and he will waste your time."

Piety is to keep away from the people of transgression, sin and inactivity. Keep the company of the pious as this is very effective. Sit facing the qiblah and follow the sunnah of Nabī ﷺ. Value the supplication of the pious people and protect yourself from the cry of the oppressed.

It has been narrated that two men went out in search of knowledge. They were colleagues and returned after several years to their home-town. One had mastered jurisprudence while the other was bereft of knowledge. This made the jurists of the town ponder over their condition and they began enquiring about their condition, their revision of lessons and their sitting down and studying. They were informed that the student who became a jurist used to revise his lessons while facing the qiblah and while facing the city in which he studied, while the other student used to make his back face the qiblah and his face was in the direction of some other city.

The Úlamā unanimously agreed that the one who

became a jurist did so due to the blessing of facing the qiblah as this is the sunnah method of sitting except at the time of necessity. He also may have benefitted from the supplication of the Muslims because the city normally has worshippers, ascetics and pious people. Some pious worshipper could have supplicated for him at night.

The student should therefore not be lax in adopting the sunnats and the correct etiquette. Whoever is deficient in the etiquette will be deprived of the sunnahs and whoever takes the sunnahs lightly will be deprived of the obligations. And whoever is negligent of his obligations will be deprived in the hereafter. Some scholars quote a hadīth having this meaning.

The student should perform ṣalāh abundantly. His ṣalāh must be one of humility as these factors will assist him in achieving knowledge.

The following verses of Sheikh Najmud-dīn Úmar

Ibn Muḥammad An-Nasafi⁴⁹ (رحمه الله) were recited to me,

Protect the commands and prohibitions of Shari'ah.

Be punctual and regular in your ṣalāh.

Seek the knowledge of Shari'ah and strive.

Seek assistance with good things, you will become a jurist and scholar.

Ask Allāh to protect your memory while seeking His grace

because Allāh is the best protector.

He also said,

Obey Allāh, strive for knowledge and do not be lax.

You are going to return to your Lord.

Do not sleep because the best people among the creation

⁴⁹ He was a jurist, muḥaddith and writer per excellence, having written many books. He was the teacher of the author of Al-Hidāyah. He passed away in Samarqand in 537 A.H. (1142 C.E.).

sleep very little at night.

The student should always carry a notebook with him in order to continue studying. It has been said that the person who does not have a notebook in his pocket will not receive wisdom in his heart.

He should keep a blank notebook and a pen in order to note down whatever he hears from the scholars. In this regard, we have already mentioned the ḥadīth of Hilāl Ibn Yasār ؓ.

Factors Which Improve the Memory

The best way of improving the memory is to strive, be punctual, eat less, perform salāh at night and to recite the Qur'ān.

It has been said that nothing increases the memory as much as looking in the Qur'ān and reciting it. To look inside and read is better because Nabī ﷺ said, "The greatest of actions of my ummat is to look inside the Qur'ān and recite it." Shaddād Ibn Hakīm (رحمه الله) saw one of his brothers in a dream and asked him which action he found to be the most beneficial. He replied, "To look in the Qur'ān and recite it."

When picking up a book, recite the following,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا
خَوْفَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ عَدَدَ كُلِّ حَرْفٍ
كُتِبَ وَ يُكْتَبُ أَبَدَ الْأَبَدِينَ وَ دَهْرَ الدَّاهِرِينَ .

"In the name of Allāh, glory to Allāh and all praises are due to Him. There is no god besides Allāh. Allāh is the greatest. There is no power and might except from Allāh, the High, the Great, the Mighty and the Knowledgeable. Glory to Allāh the amount of alphabets that have been written and that will be written till eternity."

Recite this after every fard salāh,

آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ الْحَقِّ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَكَفَرْتُ بِمَا
سِوَاهُ .

"I believed in Allāh, who is alone, one and true. He has no partner. I have disbelieved in all those besides Him."

The student should send abundant salutations upon Nabī ﷺ as his mention is a means of mercy to the worlds.

Imām Shāfi'ī (رحمه الله) said,

I mentioned the weakness of my memory to my teacher Wakī'.⁵⁰

He strongly advised me to abstain from sin.

The memory is a grace of the Almighty.

And the grace of Allāh is not granted to a sinner.

To brush the teeth with the miswāk, to drink honey, to use frankincense and to eat 21 raisins daily on an empty stomach increase the memory and protect one from many diseases. Whatever decreases phlegm and moisture increases the memory and whatever increases phlegm creates forgetfulness.

As for those factors which create forgetfulness, they are: sins, excessive transgression, grief and worry regarding worldly matters and having excessive pre-occupations and contacts.

⁵⁰ Wakī' Ibnul Jarrāh was the teacher of Imām Shāfi'ī. He passed away in 197 A.H. (812 C.E.).

We have previously mentioned that a person should not engross himself in secular matters as these are harmful and provide no benefit. The grief of the world creates a kind of darkness in the heart while the concern for the hereafter creates a light in the heart. Its effect manifests itself in ṣalāh. The concern for the world prevents one from doing good work while the concern for the hereafter encourages one to carry out pious deeds. Pre-occupying oneself in ṣalāh with humility and obtaining knowledge remove concern and grief as Sheikh Naṣr Ibnul Ḥasan Al-Marghīnānī (رحمه الله) has indicated in his qasīdah:

Assist Naṣr Ibnul Ḥasan in every knowledge that can be gained.

Knowledge removes grief. All other things are false and cannot be relied upon.

Sheikh Najmud-dīn Ūmar Ibnul Ḥasan Al-Marghīnānī (رحمه الله) said,

Greetings to the beloved who has enthralled me with her elegance, the glimmer of her cheek and

the glitter of her eye.

A beautiful maiden has imprisoned me and kindled love in my heart. The minds of the people are perplexed with the reality of her attributes.

I said to her, "Leave me alone and excuse me because I am pre-occupied in obtaining knowledge.

I am so engrossed in obtaining grace, knowledge and piety that I am no more in need of the singing and fragrance of beautiful women.

The causes of forgetting knowledge are: to eat green coriander, to eat a bitter apple, to look at something having a cross, to read the writing on tombstones, to walk among camels, to throw live lice onto the ground and to do cupping of the nape of the neck.⁵¹

⁵¹ One should not forget the advice of Imām Wakī' about abandoning sin for it is the greatest cause of forgetfulness.

Factors Which Increase or Decrease Sustenance

It is essential for the student to have strength and to know what increases it and also what increases one's lifespan so that he can be at ease when seeking knowledge. The scholars have written many books on this subject. Here I will briefly quote a few points.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Nothing changes predestination except du'ā and nothing can increase the lifespan except doing good deeds. A person is deprived of sustenance due to committing sins."

This hadīth proves that the perpetration of sins is a cause of depriving one of sustenance. This is especially the case with speaking lies for it creates poverty. A specific hadīth has been narrated in this regard. The morning sleep also deprives one of sustenance. Excessive sleep causes poverty of wealth and poverty in knowledge. A poet said,

People become pleased by donning expensive

clothing.

Knowledge can only be obtained by abandoning sleep.

Another poet said,

*Is it not most unfortunate that the nights
are passing by without any benefit and
decreasing your lifespan.*

He also said,

*Stay awake at night, perhaps you may gain
some guidance.*

*Till when will you continue sleeping while your
life decreases.*

Some of the factors which cause poverty and which have been transmitted from the scholars are: to sleep naked, to urinate in the nude, to eat in a state of janābat⁵², to eat while leaning on one's side, to disregard the dropped morsels of food, to burn the

⁵² A state of spiritual impurity in which a bath is obligatory.

peels of onions and garlic, to sweep the house at night with a towel, to leave dirt in the house, to walk in front of the Mashāikh, to call one's parents by name, to pick the teeth with any kind of stick (that is not meant to be a toothpick), to clean the hands with sand, to sit on a doorframe, to stand and lean on one part of the door, to perform wudū in the toilet, to sew clothing that is on the body, to dry the face with one's clothing, to leave the spider webs in the house, to be lazy in ṣalāh, to hasten from the masjid after the Fajr Ṣalāh, to rush when going to the marketplace, to delay in returning from the marketplace, to buy pieces of bread from beggars, to beg, to supplicate against one's father⁵³, not to cover utensils and to blow out lamps by exhaling on them.

Similarly, writing with a pen that was broken and then repaired by being tied, to comb the hair with a broken comb, not to supplicate for one's parents, to sit and don the turban, to stand and don the trousers, to be stingy, not to spend when it is necessary, to be

⁵³ Some manuscripts of this book have the word 'walad' instead of wālid which means offspring.

extravagant and to be lazy and sluggish in all work cause poverty.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Obtain sustenance by giving abundant charity." To wake up early in the morning increases all bounties especially sustenance.

Good handwriting is a key to sustenance while a pleasant countenance and speaking gently to the people increase the memory and sustenance. Hasan Ibn `Alī used to say, "To clean the house and to wash the utensils cause a person to become wealthy."

The strongest cause of sustenance is to perform ṣalāh with concentration and humility and to perform each posture correctly taking into consideration all the wājib, sunnah and mustahab⁵⁴ factors. The Ṣalātud-duḥā is most effective for this, as is the recitation of Sūrah Wāqī'ah at night before sleeping, the recitation of Sūrah Mulk, Sūrah Muzzammil, Sūrah Wal-layl, Sūrah Inshirāh, to enter the musjid before the adhān.

⁵⁴ meritorious

to be constantly in a state of purity, to perform the sunnah of Fajr and the Witr Ṣalāh at home, not to speak of worldly things after Witr, not to frequently sit with women except at the time of need and not to speak of futile things.

It has been said that whoever pre-occupies himself in futile things, will miss out on the important matters. Buzurgmihr⁵⁵ said, "When you see a person talking a lot, be certain that he is insane." `Alī used to say, "When the intelligence becomes perfect, speech decreases."

I have composed a few verses in this regard,

When a person's intellect becomes complete, his speech decreases.

Be certain of the one who is a chatterbox that he is a fool.

Speaking is a means of beauty while remaining silent is safety.

When you speak, do not speak a lot.

⁵⁵ A Persian sage who was the minister of Kisrā Anūsherwān (531-578). Many proverbs and wise sayings have been attributed to him.

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⁵⁵ A Persian sage who was the minister of Kisrā Anūsherwān (531-578). Many proverbs and wise sayings have been attributed to him.

*I never regretted remaining silent even once.
But I regretted several times for speaking.*

In order to increase your sustenance, recite the following 100 times every day at the time of true dawn till the time of salāh:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَ بِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَ
أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمِ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

Also recite 100 times every morning and evening:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ .

Every day, recite 33 times after the Fajr and Maghrib Salāh:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Seek forgiveness from Allāh 70 times after the Fajr Salāh. Read abundantly:

لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ .

Also send abundant salutations upon Nabī ﷺ (salāt 'alan Nabī).

Read 70 times on Friday:

اللَّهُمَّ أَغْنِنِي بِحَلَالِكَ عَنْ حَرَامِكَ وَ أَكْفِنِي بِفَضْلِكَ عَمَّنْ سِوَاكَ .

Read the following eulogy abundantly every day and night:

أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْحَكِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ الْخَيْرِ وَالْشَّرِّ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ عَالِمُ السَّرِّ وَ أَخْفَى ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالَى ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ، وَ إِلَيْهِ يَعُودُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ دَيَّانُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ، لَمْ تَزَلْ وَ لَا تَزَالُ ، أَنْتَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَ لَمْ يُولَدْ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ، أَنْتَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ ، السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ

الْمُهَيِّمِينَ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْخَالِقُ ، الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ .

Factors which increase one's lifespan are: good deeds, abandoning acts that cause harm to others, respecting the scholars, joining family ties and to read three times morning and evening every day:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغِ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغِ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ
وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغِ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ .

Do not cut down green trees except for necessity. Completing one's ablution properly, to perform *ṣalāh* with reverence, to perform *qirān*, that is, the *hajj* and *umrah* with one *ihrām* and to protect one's health increase one's life.

It is also essential to learn some medicine and to benefit from the narrations which Imām Abul Ābbās

Al-Mustaghfirī (رحمه الله) has quoted in his book, 'Tibbun Nabī ﷺ'. This book is not rare and can be easily obtained.

All praises are due to Allāh ﷻ for granting the ability to complete this book and salutations upon Nabī ﷺ, the noblest of prophets, his family and his esteemed companions till eternity. Āmīn.

O Allāh, the One who makes tasks easy, this book entitled 'Ta'līmul Mut'allim' was completed before midday at Madrasah Sarāyā in Qaysariyah⁵⁶ in 1151 A.H.

وصلی الله تعالی علی خیر خلقه محمد وعلی أصحابه وأهل بیته
وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمین

⁵⁶ The capital of the Saljūk dynasty, presently part of Turkey.

المُهَيِّمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْخَالِقُ ، الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ .

Factors which increase one's lifespan are: good deeds, abandoning acts that cause harm to others, respecting the scholars, joining family ties and to read three times morning and evening every day:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغَ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغَ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ
وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ مِلْءَ الْمِيزَانِ وَ مُنْتَهَى الْعِلْمِ وَمَبْلَغَ الرِّضَا وَ زِينَةَ الْعَرْشِ .

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Index

A

ʿAbdul ʿAzīz Ibn Aḥmad, 37
 ʿAbdul Malik Ibn Qarīb, 39
 ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbbās, 73, 88
 Abū ʿAbdillāh Al-Jurjānī, 69
 Abū At-Tayyib, 49, 52
 Abū At-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbī, 49
 Abū Ḥafṣ Al-Kabīr, 74
 Abū Muḥammad An-Naḥwī, 57
 Abul Fath Al-Bustī, 94
 Abul Ḥasan, 90
 Abū Ṭayyib, 94
 Ad-Dīwān, 82
 adhān, 114
 aḥādīth, 18, 24
 Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamā'ah, 75
 Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad, 54
 Al-Adīb Al-Ustādḥ, 96
 Al-Adīb al-Mukhtār, 23
 Al-Akhlāq, 23
 Al-Bayhaqī, 11
 Al-Fawā'idul Bahīyah, 65
 Al-Ḥasan Ibn Ziyād Al-Lu'lu'ī, 88
 Al-Hidāyah, 20, 36, 81, 90, 91, 104
 ʿAlī, 28, 34
 ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr, 90
 ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad Isbījābī, 81
 ālim, 35, 90
 Allāh, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19,
 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 48, 49, 52, 54,
 56, 62, 67, 75, 76, 77, 79, 82, 97,
 99, 100, 104, 107, 108, 116, 119
 Al-Mabsūt, 38
 Amīr al-Mu'minīn ʿAlī, 56

An-Nasafī, 104
 Ar-Rāzī, 98
 Ashābut-Takhrīj, 69
 Asma'ī, 39

B

Baghdad, 64
 Bukhārā, 21, 27, 29, 36, 37, 38, 54,
 64, 91, 97
 Burhānud-dīn, 24, 36, 41, 43, 58, 64,
 69, 81, 90
 Burhānud-dīn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr, 24
 Buzurgmihr, 115

D

dhikr, 100
 Dhul Qarnain, 53
 Dīn, 19, 20, 22, 51, 82
 du'ā, 16, 86, 111

F

Fajr, 113, 115, 116
 Fakhrul Islam Irsābandī, 78
 fard kifāyah, 15, 17
 Fiqh, 17, 37, 38

G

Greek, 62

H

ḥadīth, 19, 26, 44, 64, 100, 103, 105,
 111
 ḥajj, 12, 118
 Ḥammād Ibn Abī Sulaimān, 26
 Ḥanafī, 37, 38, 85, 90, 91
 ḥarām, 15, 16
 Ḥārūn Ar-Rashīd, 39
 Ḥasan Ibn ʿAlī, 114
 Ḥasan Ibn Manṣūr Al-Auzjandī, 41
 Ḥaṭī'ah, 82
 Hijrah, 54, 90
 Hilāl Ibn Zayd Ibn Yasār, 96
 Ḥusāmud-dīn, 91, 97

I

Ibn Mājah, 11, 24
 Ibn Sabīḥ Al-Māzinī, 85
 Ibnul Jarrāḥ, 108
 Ibrāhīm, 21, 67, 85
 Ibrāhīm Ibnul Jarrāḥ, 85
 iḥrām, 118
 imām, 15
 Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, 12, 17, 21, 24,
 26, 27, 41, 42, 54, 65, 73, 75, 82,
 88
 Imām Abū Naṣr Aṣ-Saffār Al-Anṣārī,
 54
 Imām Abū Yūsuf, 54, 72, 73, 74, 77,
 80, 85
 Imām Abul ʿAbbās Al-Mustaghfirī,
 119
 Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī, 47
 Imām Bukhārī, 44
 Imām Burhānud-dīn, 20, 57
 Imām Fakhrud-dīn, 41, 72
 Imām Ḥalwānī, 38
 Imām Ḥasan Ibn Ziyād, 88

Imām Majdud-dīn Sarkhakī, 42
 Imām Muḥammad, 12, 13, 20, 37,
 44, 53, 72, 77, 84, 85, 86, 89
 Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'il Al-
 Bukhārī, 44
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan, 12,
 13, 20, 44, 53, 72, 77, 84, 85, 86,
 89
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan As-
 Shaybānī, 12
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥusain Abū
 Ja'far, 37
 Imām Nāṣirud-dīn Abul Qāsim, 15
 Imām Qiwāmud-dīn Ḥammād Ibn
 Ibrāhīm Ibn Ismā'il As-Saffār Al-
 Anṣārī, 21
 Imam Sadidud-dīn Shirāzī, 35
 Imām Shāfi'ī, 17, 24, 108
 Imām Sharafud-dīn Al-ʿUqailī, 66
 Imām Zāhirud-dīn Ḥasan Ibn ʿAlī, 56
 ʿIsām Ibn Yūsuf, 97
 ʾishā, 50, 88

J

Ja'far Aṣ-Ṣadiq, 28
 Jābir Ibn ʿAbdullāh, 38
 Jālīnūs, 62
 janābat, 112
 jihād, 84, 89

K

Ka'bah, 16
 Khāharzādah, 92
 Khalīfah, 39
 Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad, 67, 70
 Khurāsān, 40
 Kisrā Anūsherwān, 115
 Kitābul Waṣīyah, 24

Index

A

ʿAbdul ʿAzīz Ibn Aḥmad, 37
 ʿAbdul Malik Ibn Qarīb, 39
 ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbbās, 73, 88
 Abū ʿAbdillāh Al-Jurjānī, 69
 Abū At-Tayyib, 49, 52
 Abū At-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbī, 49
 Abū Ḥafṣ Al-Kabīr, 74
 Abū Muḥammad An-Naḥwī, 57
 Abul Fath Al-Bustī, 94
 Abul Ḥasan, 90
 Abuṭ Tayyib, 94
 Ad-Dīwān, 82
 adhān, 114
 aḥādīth, 18, 24
 Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamā'ah, 75
 Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad, 54
 Al-Adīb Al-Ustādh, 96
 Al-Adīb al-Mukhtār, 23
 Al-Akhlāq, 23
 Al-Bayhaqī, 11
 Al-Fawā'idul Bahīyah, 65
 Al-Ḥasan Ibn Ziyād Al-Lu'lu'ī, 88
 Al-Hidāyah, 20, 36, 81, 90, 91, 104
 ʿAlī, 28, 34
 ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr, 90
 ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad Isbījābī, 81
 ālim, 35, 90
 Allāh, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19,
 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 48, 49, 52, 54,
 56, 62, 67, 75, 76, 77, 79, 82, 97,
 99, 100, 104, 107, 108, 116, 119
 Al-Mabsūṭ, 38
 Amīr al-Mu'minīn ʿAlī, 56

An-Nasafī, 104
 Ar-Rāzī, 98
 Aṣḥāb al-Takhrīj, 69
 Aṣma'ī, 39

B

Baghdad, 64
 Bukhārā, 21, 27, 29, 36, 37, 38, 54,
 64, 91, 97
 Burhān al-dīn, 24, 36, 41, 43, 58, 64,
 69, 81, 90
 Burhān al-dīn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr, 24
 Buzurgmihr, 115

D

dhikr, 100
 Dhul Qarnain, 53
 Dīn, 19, 20, 22, 51, 82
 du'ā, 16, 86, 111

F

Fajr, 113, 115, 116
 Fakhr al-Islam Irsābandī, 78
 fard kifāyah, 15, 17
 Fiqh, 17, 37, 38

G

Greek, 62

H

ḥadīth, 19, 26, 44, 64, 100, 103, 105,
 111
 ḥajj, 12, 118
 Ḥammād Ibn Abī Sulaimān, 26
 Ḥanafī, 37, 38, 85, 90, 91
 ḥarām, 15, 16
 Ḥārūn Ar-Rashīd, 39
 Ḥasan Ibn ʿAlī, 114
 Ḥasan Ibn Maṣṣūr Al-Auzjandī, 41
 Ḥaṭī'ah, 82
 Hijrah, 54, 90
 Hilāl Ibn Zayd Ibn Yasār, 96
 Ḥusām al-dīn, 91, 97

I

Ibn Mājah, 11, 24
 Ibn Sabīḥ Al-Māzinī, 85
 Ibnul Jarrah, 108
 Ibrāhīm, 21, 67, 85
 Ibrāhīm Ibnul Jarrah, 85
 iḥrām, 118
 imām, 15
 Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, 12, 17, 21, 24,
 26, 27, 41, 42, 54, 65, 73, 75, 82,
 88
 Imām Abū Naṣr Aṣ-Saffār Al-Anṣārī,
 54
 Imām Abū Yūsuf, 54, 72, 73, 74, 77,
 80, 85
 Imām Abul ʿAbbās Al-Mustaghfirī,
 119
 Imām Ash-Shāfi'ī, 47
 Imām Bukhārī, 44
 Imām Burhān al-dīn, 20, 57
 Imām Fakhr al-dīn, 41, 72
 Imām Ḥalwānī, 38
 Imām Ḥasan Ibn Ziyād, 88

Imām Majd al-dīn Sarkhātī, 42
 Imām Muḥammad, 12, 13, 20, 37,
 44, 53, 72, 77, 84, 85, 86, 89
 Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl Al-
 Bukhārī, 44
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan, 12,
 13, 20, 44, 53, 72, 77, 84, 85, 86,
 89
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥasan As-
 Shaybānī, 12
 Imām Muḥammad Ibnul Ḥusain Abū
 Ja'far, 37
 Imām Naṣir al-dīn Abul Qāsim, 15
 Imām Qiwām al-dīn Ḥammād Ibn
 Ibrāhīm Ibn Ismā'īl Aṣ-Saffār Al-
 Anṣārī, 21
 Imam Sadid al-dīn Shirāzī, 35
 Imām Shāfi'ī, 17, 24, 108
 Imām Sharaf al-dīn Al-ʿUqailī, 66
 Imām Zahir al-dīn Ḥasan Ibn ʿAlī, 56
 ʾIsām Ibn Yūsuf, 97
 ʾIshā, 50, 88

J

Ja'far Aṣ-Ṣadiq, 28
 Jābir Ibn ʿAbdullāh, 38
 Jālīnūs, 62
 janābat, 112
 jihād, 84, 89

K

Ka'bah, 16
 Khāharzādah, 92
 Khalīfah, 39
 Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad, 67, 70
 Khurāsān, 40
 Kisrā Anūsherwān, 115
 Kitābul Waṣīyah, 24

Kufah, 85, 88

M

Madrasah Sarāyā, 119
 maghāzī, 89
 Maghrib, 50, 88, 116
 Makārimul Akhlāq, 53
 Mansūr Al-Hallāj, 83
 Marghīnān, 23
 Marghīnānī, 56, 109
 Marw, 37, 64
 mas'alah, 43, 72, 73, 75, 81, 86
 masāil, 26, 41, 87
 Mashāikh, 35, 42, 65, 66, 113
 miswāk, 61, 108
 Moulānā Abdul Hayy, 65
 muftī, 24, 91
 Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Yūsuf
 Al-Farghānī, 23
 Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad As-Sarakhsī,
 40
 muqallid, 25
 Mūsā, 84
 masjid, 37, 113, 114
 Muslim, 11, 15, 16
 mustahab, 114

N

Nabī, 19, 32, 36, 45, 52, 62, 76, 78,
 83, 88, 97, 102, 106, 107, 117,
 119
 Najmud-dīn, 103, 109
 Nīsābūr, 98

P

Persian, 32, 115

Q

Qādī Abū Zaid Ad-Dabūsī, 37
 Qādī Al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Ash-
 Shajarī, 67
 Qādī Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Az-
 Zaranjarī, 38
 Qādī Fakhrud-dīn Al-Arsābandī, 37
 Qādī Khān, 41, 81
 Qādī Ūmar Ibn Abī Bakr Az-
 Zaranjarī, 65
 qasīdah, 109
 Qaysariyah, 119
 qiblah, 102, 103
 qirān, 118
 Qiwāmud-dīn Hammād Ibn Ibrāhīm
 Ibn Ismā'il As-Saffār Al-Anṣārī,
 67
 Qiyāmah, 26, 101
 Qur'ān, 16, 46, 61, 88, 90, 106

R

ramī, 85, 86
 Rasūlullāh, 11, 16, 19, 51, 54, 64, 72,
 76, 78, 79, 93, 96, 100, 111, 114
 Rayy, 12, 98

S

Sahabah, 27
 salāh, 11, 16, 61, 63, 83, 103, 104,
 106, 107, 109, 113, 114, 116, 118
 Salāh, 11, 44, 113, 115, 116
 Salātud-duḥā, 114
 Saljūk, 119
 Samarqand, 21, 27, 81, 104
 Shaddād Ibn Hakīm, 106
 Shamsud-dīn, 97
 Shamsul Aimmah Al-Halwānī, 77

Shamsul Aimmah As-Sarakhsī, 40
 Sharī'ah, 79, 104
 shaytān, 85
 Sheikh Isbījābī, 81
 Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr, 91
 Sheikh Muḥammad Ibnul Jalīl
 Muḥammad Ibnul Fadl, 101
 Sheikh Naṣr Ibnul Ḥasan, 109
 Sheikh Qiwāmud-dīn Aḥmad Ibn
 Ābdir Rashīd, 64
 Sheikh Raḍīud-dīn An-Nīsābūrī, 53
 Sheikh Ruknud-dīn, 23
 Sheikh Sadīdud-dīn Ash-Shīrāzī, 47
 Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Al-
 Halwānī, 37
 Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Halwānī,
 40
 Sheikh Zaynul Islām, 96
 Sheikhul Islām, 36, 64, 81, 90, 98
 Shu'abul Imān, 11
 Sufyan Ath-Thaurī, 28
 Sultānus Sharī'at, 92
 sunnat, 61
 Sūrah Ānkabūt, 46
 Sūrah Inshirāh, 114
 Sūrah Maryam, 46
 Sūrah Mulk, 114
 Sūrah Muzzammil, 114
 Sūrah Wal-layl, 114
 Sūrah Wāqī'ah, 114

T

Ta'līmūl Mut'allim, 119

tafsīr, 40, 89
 Tahajjud, 50
 Tājūd-dīn, 91
 Taqwīmūl Adillah, 37
 Taṣawwuf, 65
 tauhīd, 25
 Turkey, 119

U

Ūlamā, 26, 102
 Ūmar, 65, 82, 90, 91, 97, 103, 109

W

wājib, 114
 Wakī, 108, 110
 Wit, 115
 wudū, 39, 40, 113

Y

Yahyā, 46, 69, 98
 Yūsuf Al-Hamdhānī, 64
 Yūsuf Hamdhānī, 92
 Yūsuf Ibn Ayyūb Al-Hamdhānī, 6
 Yūsuf Ibn Khālīd As-Samtī, 24

Z

Zabarqān Ibn Badr, 82
 zakāh, 12

Kufah, 85, 88

M

Madrasah Sarāyā, 119
 maghāzī, 89
 Maghrib, 50, 88, 116
 Makārimul Akhlāq, 53
 Manṣūr Al-Hallāj, 83
 Marghīnān, 23
 Marghīnānī, 56, 109
 Marw, 37, 64
 mas'alah, 43, 72, 73, 75, 81, 86
 masāil, 26, 41, 87
 Mashāikh, 35, 42, 65, 66, 113
 miswāk, 61, 108
 Moulānā Abdul Hayy, 65
 muftī, 24, 91
 Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Yūsuf
 Al-Farghānī, 23
 Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad As-Sarakhsī,
 40
 muqallid, 25
 Mūsā, 84
 musjid, 37, 113, 114
 Muslim, 11, 15, 16
 mustahab, 114

N

Nabī, 19, 32, 36, 45, 52, 62, 76, 78,
 83, 88, 97, 102, 106, 107, 117,
 119
 Najmud-dīn, 103, 109
 Nīsābūr, 98

P

Persian, 32, 115

Q

Qādī Abū Zaid Ad-Dabūsī, 37
 Qādī Al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Ash-
 Shajarī, 67
 Qādī Bakr Ibn Muḥammad Az-
 Zaranjarī, 38
 Qādī Fakhrud-dīn Al-Arsābandī, 37
 Qādī Khān, 41, 81
 Qādī Ūmar Ibn Abī Bakr Az-
 Zaranjarī, 65
 qasīdah, 109
 Qaysariyah, 119
 qiblah, 102, 103
 qirān, 118
 Qiwāmud-dīn Hammād Ibn Ibrāhīm
 Ibn Ismā'īl As-Saffār Al-Anṣārī,
 67
 Qiyāmah, 26, 101
 Qur'ān, 16, 46, 61, 88, 90, 106

R

ramī, 85, 86
 Rasūlullāh, 11, 16, 19, 51, 54, 64, 72,
 76, 78, 79, 93, 96, 100, 111, 114
 Rayy, 12, 98

S

Sahabah, 27
 salāh, 11, 16, 61, 63, 83, 103, 104,
 106, 107, 109, 113, 114, 116, 118
 Salāh, 11, 44, 113, 115, 116
 Salātud-duḥā, 114
 Saljūk, 119
 Samarqand, 21, 27, 81, 104
 Shaddād Ibn Hakīm, 106
 Shamsud-dīn, 97
 Shamsul Aimmah Al-Halwānī, 77

Shamsul Aimmah As-Sarakhsī, 40
 Sharī'ah, 79, 104
 shaytān, 85
 Sheikh Isbjābī, 81
 Sheikh Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr, 91
 Sheikh Muḥammad Ibnul Jalīl
 Muḥammad Ibnul Fadl, 101
 Sheikh Naṣr Ibnul Ḥasan, 109
 Sheikh Qiwāmud-dīn Aḥmad Ibn
 Ābdī Rashīd, 64
 Sheikh Raḍīud-dīn An-Nīsābūrī, 53
 Sheikh Ruknud-dīn, 23
 Sheikh Sadīdud-dīn Ash-Shīrāzī, 47
 Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Al-
 Halwānī, 37
 Sheikh Shamsul Aimmah Halwānī,
 40
 Sheikh Zaynul Islām, 96
 Sheikhul Islām, 36, 64, 81, 90, 98
 Shu'abul Imān, 11
 Sufyan Ath-Thauri, 28
 Sulṭānus Sharī'at, 92
 sunnat, 61
 Sūrah Ānkabūt, 46
 Sūrah Inshirāh, 114
 Sūrah Maryam, 46
 Sūrah Mulk, 114
 Sūrah Muzzammil, 114
 Sūrah Wal-layl, 114
 Sūrah Wāqī'ah, 114

T

Ta'limul Mut'allim, 119

tafsīr, 40, 89
 Tahajjud, 50
 Tājūd-dīn, 91
 Taqwīmul Adillah, 37
 Taṣawwuf, 65
 tauhīd, 25
 Turkey, 119

U

Ūlamā, 26, 102
 Ūmar, 65, 82, 90, 91, 97, 103, 109

W

wājib, 114
 Wakī, 108, 110
 Witir, 115
 wudū, 39, 40, 113

Y

Yahyā, 46, 69, 98
 Yūsuf Al-Hamdḥānī, 64
 Yūsuf Hamdhānī, 92
 Yūsuf Ibn Ayyūb Al-Hamdḥānī, 64
 Yūsuf Ibn Khālid As-Samtī, 24

Z

Zabarqān Ibn Badr, 82
 zakāh, 12

وصلی اللہ تعالیٰ علی خیر خلقہ محمد وعلی أصحابہ وأهل بیتہ

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمین

